

ivingCity

6 1987
VOLUME 26
JUNE
\$1.25

...and suddenly it was

Property of
Graduate Theological Union

JUN 23 1987



GENFEST!

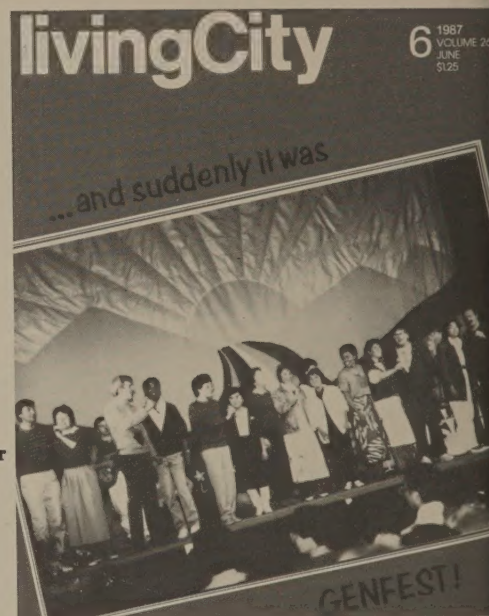


2 **THE SPIRITUALITY OF UNITY:** a reflection by Chiara Lubich.



3 **"BUILDERS OF THAT CITY OF MARY":** Bishops-friends of the Focolare Movement meet in Rome.

Sharry Silvi	Editor
Phyllis Scaringe	Assistant Editor
Anne Lingley	Managing Editor
Chiaretta Zanzucchi	Art Director
Joseph Klock Patricia Dreveny Gail Giacobbe Daniel Jennings	Contributing Editors
Vera Giannini	Senior Copy Editor
Richard Tetreau	Copy Editor
Denise Silva	Assistant Art Director
Bernadette Raha	Circulation Manager
Rolf F. Rehe	Art Consultant



Living City is published 11 times a year (10 monthly and a bimonthly issue in August-September) by the Focolare Movement Women's Branch, Inc. a non-profit corporation, P. O. Box 496, New York, NY 10021.

Subscription prices for one year: USA and possessions: US\$12.75; Canada: US\$19.00; Elsewhere: US\$20.00; Air Mail (all countries): US\$30.00.

An envelope is enclosed in each magazine for subscription orders and inquiries: LIVING CITY, P. O. Box 126, Jamaica, NY 11415.

© 1987 by the Focolare Movement, Women's Branch, Inc. All rights reserved.

OTHER EDITIONS OF THE FOCOLARE MOVEMENT MAGAZINE

ITALIAN: "Citta Nuova" - Via degli Scipioni 26
00192 Rome - Italy

FRENCH:

1. "Nouvelle Cite" - 131, Rue Castagnary F75 015 - Paris
France

2. "Nouvelle Cite" - C.P. 405 - St. Youville - P. Quebec
Canada - H2P 2V6



4 **GENFEST '87:** The North American Genfest took place at Mariapolis Luminosa in conjunction with other Genfests around the globe.



12 **AUGUSTINE'S JOURNEY:** An interview with one of the foremost experts on the life and works of St. Augustine.



16 **LOVE IS STRONGER:** Part III of the new book by Matteo Silvan.

CONTENTS

<i>Chiara Lubich</i>	The key to every unity	2
<i>Oreste Paliotti</i>	"Builders of that city of Mary"	3
<i>Sharry Silvi</i>	And it was suddenly Genfest	4
<i>Antonio M. Baggio</i>	Augustine's journey	12
<i>Matteo Silvan</i>	Love is stronger	16

OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Word of life	20
Experiences of life	21
Towards a new humanity	22
Mariapolis 1987	26

SPANISH:

1. "Ciudad Nueva"- Av. da Rivadavia 4939 - Buenos Aires 24 - Argentina
2. "Ciudad Nueva"- Ferrer del Rio, 1 Esc A, 2º 5ª Madrid - Spain

PORTUGUESE: "Cidade Nova" CX POSTAL 30 06730 Vargem Grande Pta. Sao Paulo - Brazil

CHINESE: "San Sing Seung Yuet Hong" - 70 Waterloo Road 11 B/F - Kowloon - Hong Kong

DUTCH: "Nieuwe Stad" - St. Stephanusstrasse 11 Nijmegen - Holland

GERMAN: "Neue Stadt" - Gleissnerstrasse 87 - 8000 Munchen 83 - Germany

OTHER ENGLISH EDITIONS:

1. "New City" - 57 Twyford Avenue - London W3 England
2. "New City" - P.O. Box 332 - Manila, Philippines
3. "New City" - 367 Balwyn Rd - Balwyn North 3104 - Australia



THE SPIRITUALITY OF UNITY

The key to every unity

Question: On many occasions you have spoken about Jesus Forsaken. Could you tell me how to make him a part of my life more concretely?

A Polish youth in Rome

Answer: Jesus Forsaken manifested himself to us in 1944 at the very beginning of the Movement. It happened one day that a priest asked me, "When do you think it was that Jesus suffered the most?" At that time it was generally held that Jesus endured the greatest suffering during his agony in the garden and this was the answer I gave. But the priest responded "No, Jesus suffered most when he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"

Later we learned that many theologians and saints, like John of the Cross, consider that moment to have been the culmination of Jesus' passion.

But, from that moment on, my first companions and I would say, "We have only one life. We should try to spend it in the best possible way. Let's try to give ourselves to Jesus Forsaken; we want him to be the ideal of our lives." God who is Love is our ideal, but in order live in tune with this Ideal we must follow Jesus Crucified in his abandonment.

From that time on he, in a way, helped us to discover his presence in all kinds of situations. We found him in our personal sufferings. When we experienced darkness within us we would say, "Jesus Forsaken, too, experienced darkness, so I will not just endure this darkness. I chose Jesus Forsaken and so I choose this darkness; that means I embrace him forsaken and I go ahead." In so doing we would go from death to resurrection, from living the crucifixion to living the Risen Lord.

Other times we felt the burden of our own sins. Also Jesus experienced the weight of sin, not his own but the sins of others. Yet, before dying he said, "Father, into your hands...." That tells me that I, too, should not hold onto the burden coming from my sins but embrace that feeling and go on.

It was not a matter, however, of loving Jesus Forsaken only in ourselves, we found him outside of ourselves, in others. For example, an orphan seemed to be the prototype of Jesus Forsaken, and likewise a widow who lost her spouse.

We analyzed every kind of suffering, particularly spiritual sufferings, and we saw that all of them are reflected in Jesus Forsaken; we can recognize there many aspects, countenances, one could say, of Jesus Forsaken. Where we found this mystery to be clearly evident was in divisions. When there is division between two persons, when something is wrong in a relationship, when we feel there is no longer unity in the community, that Jesus is no longer present among us, we pause and say from the depths of our heart, "Jesus, this is really you. Right now, in this suffering I love you."

Hence, for a Christian, every human reality can be looked upon from two points of view. From one we see darkness, division. From the other, that is, when we step onto a supernatural level, we say, "This suffering I feel resembles you. It is a presence of you, your countenance." I embrace this suffering, resolve myself, and I go ahead. I go to recompose unity with my neighbor.

It is because of all this that we are attracted to entertain a dialogue with everyone. Dialogue, therefore, within the Catholic Church, with other movements and groups which are part of it and with all the Church's members, but also dialogue with Christians of other Churches. An ecumenical movement has developed from this dialogue.

Dialogues with people of other religions, and with people of good will who perhaps profess no religion at all have developed as well.

Who led us to initiate these dialogues? It was he, forsaken. We felt led to seek him out like the bride in the Song of Songs.

With other Christians we speak about the importance of being united in what we have in common: baptism and mutual love. With believers of other religions what unites us is our faith in God. With those who do not believe, it can be good will which unites us.

Jesus Forsaken is the key to resolve every difficulty, to accomplish unity in every situation. It is written, "Love your neighbor as yourself." These words compel us to love everyone without excuses.

Chiara Lubich



“Builders of that city of Mary”

*Sixty-eight bishops who are
friends of the
Focolare Movement
gathered at the Mariapolis
Center of Castelgandolfo.*

Klaus Hemmerle, the bishop from Germany who organized the event, called the gathering “a week-long sharing and exchange of experiences and reflections, a time for spiritual deepening.”

It was the eleventh meeting of bishops-friends of the Focolare Movement this time held at the new Mariapolis Center of Castelgandolfo from February 15 to 21. Bishop Hemmerle added, “Popes Paul VI and John Paul II have encouraged and blessed these meetings and followed them with close interest.”

The theme of the gathering was “Mary,” a topic coincidentally chosen by Chiara Lubich before this year was declared a Marian year. It was the subject of her meditation at the beginning of the gathering. The bishops had their reflections and conversations on this topic as well.

The climax of the gathering was the general audience at the Vatican on February 18. In his encouraging words to the large group of bishops, the Holy Father said, “We know that Mary is one of the fundamental points of the spirituality of the Focolare Movement which is based on the last prayer of Jesus and on his promise to be present

Pope John Paul II is seen here greeting several of the bishops-friends of the Focolare Movement during a general audience. Cardinal Gantin, prefect of the Pontifical Congregation of Bishops, came to the meeting at the new Mariapolis Center of Castelgandolfo and spoke to the bishops.

where two or three are united in his name.... For this unity that the presence of Jesus generates among us there is no clearer model, no more direct way, no guarantee more certain than Mary, the mother of Jesus and the mother of Church.”

He concluded saying, “I hope that you will be always more inspired and penetrated by this conviction, and by a deep love for Mary, in order to be builders of that city of Mary that the Church wants to be and must be in order to bring, like Mary and with Mary, the light of Jesus Christ to the world today.”

“It was in this context then,” Bishop Hemmerle remarked, “that we visited Loppiano near Florence, the permanent Mariapolis, the city of Mary, a city-school and model city of the Work of Mary” (the official name of the Focolare Movement). □

... and suddenly it was Genfest!



Like fireworks, the Genfests '87 exploded in many countries of the world during the month of April, with the enthusiasm and energy characteristic of young people.

A network of solidarity linked all these Genfests which stemmed from Genfest '85 in Rome and opened up just like the shining crown of festive, colorful and brilliant fireworks.

by SHARRY SILVI



The hall quickly filled to its capacity with young people who had come from all over the North American continent. At the world Genfest '85 which took place in Rome, the Gen had promised to meet in national Genfests together with many other young people. Here Debra Castanon and Pat Markey acted as M.C.'s for the day.



Mariapolis Luminosa April 26, 1987:

The world is here through cables and messages:

From Lisbon: "We send you our warmest greetings and many, many good wishes. Certain that this day will remain as a milestone in our history, we want to build all together the civilization of love."

From Great Britain: "The young people of England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, of many different churches and traditions participate with you

in the one Genfest spread all over the world."

From Jerusalem: "We are united with you as we meet today for the Genfest in Jerusalem. Although we are in different countries, the Word makes us one."

From Thailand: "Christian and Buddhist youth of Thailand make a pact of unity with you to always go ahead together and to never give up, until the world believes."

From Italy: "We are running with you to live for a united world. Count on our unity."

From Colombia: "Like a net that encompasses the whole world, we want to build with you the one Genfest."

From Venezuela: "We live with you your Genfest '87. May God, through many people enkindled by our Ideal bring about in the world a new springtime of peace."

From Argentina: "We are certain that a united world is a reality among us."



And the finale was quite impressive!

From the Gen World Center in Rome: *"We greet the North American Genfest in the name of all the Gen of the world who are builders in forty-two Genfests from every continent. Today all of us are with you."*

From New York, Cardinal O'Connor sent a message which expressed his desire to be with the Gen. He said that from his own visit to Luminosa he was uplifted even in the rain ... by the joy and commitment of the Gen. *"Nobody does the special work of building the city of God better than you people who are here."*

And from Washington D.C. Archbishop Pio Laghi, the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio, wrote among other things: *"My dearest young people, It is my good fortune to have learned of the North American Genfest '87 as you gather in demonstration of the fact that the Word of God is truly the means to a more united world. I wish to*

Days of preparation, of rehearsals, of work done in unity, of joyful anticipation preceded the Genfest.



convey to you, who are the hope of the Church, my personal best wishes and the assurances of a particular closeness in prayer this weekend.

"To you, and to your family and friends who encourage you to be sowers of hope and builders of peace, it is my honor to convey the greetings of His Holiness Pope John Paul II who graciously imparts his Apostolic Blessing."

Chiara sent everyone her best wishes for a splendid Genfest and a video tape to help all to concentrate and reflect on the life of the Word as means to change the world.

Eight hundred filled the gym in the morning and afternoon, split up for the workshops, strolled around in the sun and sat on the grass for their lunch on a glorious day.

And there was music and singing. There was sharing at a very deep level of life experiences, real life made more real and true by living the Gospel in all situations. A young woman recounted how she overcame the desire to be "in" by drinking, through the words of Jesus and the unity of people who wanted to do the same; a

Large and small groups of youth began arriving early in the morning.



young man shared how he found his way out of drugs and despair in the Gospel lived in unity. There were experiences of sharing with the very poor, of finding God in a remote refugee camp in Indonesia, in a desolate village in Cameroon, Africa where toxic fumes from the volcanic Lake Nyos brought devastation, or on a busy street of New York.

A kaleidoscope in vivid colors, intermingled with mimes and dances and superb music. At the end, Mariapolis Luminosa was presented as a piece of a new world, a small piece, indeed, but holding a fascina-

tion for those who long to build it on a larger scale.

Mass at the end gathered us around the altar, with gratitude and joy and the sense of having lived a day filled with the presence of God.

Genfest was over and we longed to live it again in our homes and cities.

We will come back for a post Genfest at Luminosa in June. It is part of the deal, because for many, today was the beginning of a journey that we need to continue. And we will, until unity will be a reality, like the Gen of Chicago said in their mime, "cost what it may!"

Message of Chiara Lubich to the participants in the 1987 Genfest

Dear young people,

My warmest possible greetings to all of you and especially to those who have come from a certain distance.

Here we are at the 1987 Genfest.

As you know, this is not the only Genfest taking place; it is also being celebrated in many other countries throughout the world, and it serves as a follow-up to the world-wide Genfest which took place in Rome in 1985 under the title: "Many Roads Toward a United World."

At that Genfest, the participants decided they wanted to meet again—together with many other young people—in national Genfests, and this is what is happening now.

But what is a Genfest? And in particular what was Genfest '85? That event marked the birth date of a Movement of young people who firmly believe that it is possible to see a world at peace, a world in harmony, and who are making every effort at giving a contribution towards the achievement of this goal.

This Movement has taken on the name "Youth for a United World Movement," and it addresses issues relevant to youth today.

But are young people today credible? Can we trust what they think and decide?

Sociologists who study the current situation of our youth talk about pessimism and apathy among them. They say that young people are wrapped up in their own little world, avoiding the real world and its

problems, avoiding involvement in society, and so on.

This may even be true for some.

The fact is, however, that young people do not live in a vacuum. In large part they reflect the economic, political, social, cultural, and religious context of the society they live in. We cannot deny that many are just what their society wants them to be.

But not all young people are like this.

Many are not only what their society would make them. Many show themselves to be independent thinkers, determined to be what they want to be.

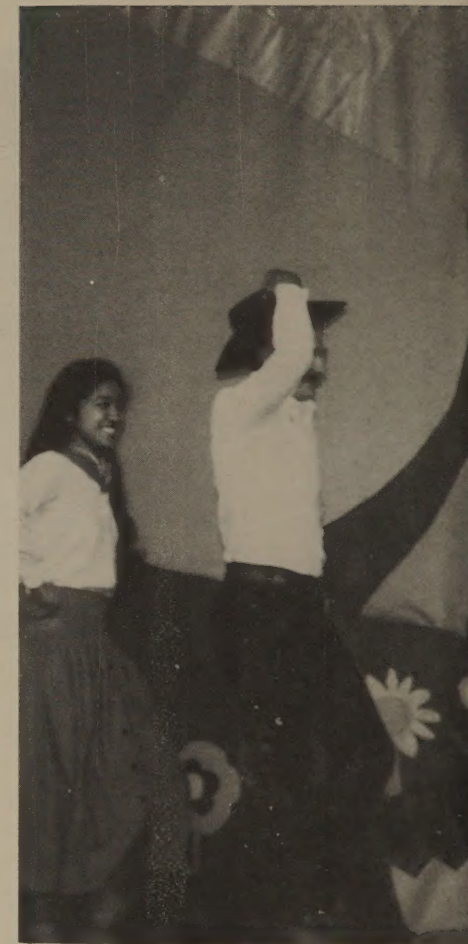
When you least expect it, they display attitudes, sentiments and values powerful enough to influence society and change it.

The recent youth protests taking place, for example, in Paris, Madrid, Rome, and Peking indicate their concept of humanity and generate a stream of positive stimuli directed at society's leaders.

These young people, offspring of a society influenced by fadism and advertising, have been able to express their hopes in a world based on high ideals, a world without barriers, without racism, in other words, a united world.

This is why the young people gathered for the world Genfest in 1985 welcomed the idea offered to them there; i.e., they believed that things could change in the world.

Knowing full well that grave social injustices exist in many countries, that there are wars going on, that human rights are being violated, that countries



do struggle in the aftermath of colonization, that situations of plaguing racism and the like do still exist, they nevertheless believe that the rebirth of our planet is possible. They have rolled up their sleeves to work at remedying these problems with an incredible number of initiatives. We see them making their way along the various roads which lead to a united world: they have been working at unity among races, at unity among nations, for human development, for unity between rich and poor, unity among generations, for peace between countries at war, for unity among people of different religions, unity between humankind and nature, unity among people of different ideologies, among ethnic minorities, unity with all those who are lonely or who suffer in any way.



Following Chiara's message via video tape, a kaleidoscope of songs, experiences, dances, and mimes were presented by Gen from Texas, California, New York and Canada. Left: a scene from a Schottish dance from Texas. Above: an experience in song by a Gen from Los Angeles.

And since they are very much aware that theirs is a high ideal, these young people do not rely only on their own strength and activities but on the One who can do all things because He is all powerful.

This is why they have set out along the one road that offers hope for a profound change of life on our planet.

Without thinking twice about what others may say, they recognize the way in Jesus. "I am the Way" he, in fact, said, and they have set out along this way trying to live out His doctrine by putting the Word of God into practice.

All that they have built—even though small in scale, or as yet to be perfected—does not seem to be out of proportion with the goal. Every step in the direction of unity, each activity, in fact, has seemed truly valid, and has spread and expanded a

new mentality open to peace and universal brotherhood. The first stones have been laid for the construction of a united world.

The Genfests '87 confirm that there is the desire to continue along these same lines, to multiply the projects all over the world, travelling all different kinds of roads in order to mend every break, to wipe out deadly differences, to bring about unity wherever it is missing.

The effort is there to show the world that some of these small projects could be carried out on a vaster scale. By going against the current in this world so saturated with materialism, secularism and consumerism, it has been possible—and it is possible—to proclaim the greatness of spiritual values. There is the desire to renew one's personal

faith in God, who can compensate for our shortcomings with his providence.

Certainly, nothing is better for youth than to place their trust in Him.

They hold in their hearts, and advocate, ideals that only God can help them achieve. They love, seek and desire freedom. Who better to obtain it from than Jesus who said, "If you live according to my teaching, you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (Jn 8: 31-31).

Young people want nature to be respected and in many nations they wage a battle to save humanity from destroying itself by dangerously polluting the environment. Who better can respond to this call than the very One who created nature for humankind?

Young people love and want peace. Who can better



The afternoon program began with a series of workshops from which the participants could choose.

1. Economy and work: a worldwide problem
2. Life: its meaning, its challenges, its escape
3. Ways to fill the gap with the unwanted in our society
4. How to succeed in your spiritual life
5. The church and the dignity of the human person
6. A new vision: the artist's view
7. Where are we on the road to Unity among Christian churches, among Religions?
8. The calling to follow Jesus
9. Youth for a United World: its roots and projects
10. Peace and Reconciliation

A beautiful spring day made it possible to have a picnic lunch outdoors and stroll in the sun. Back in the hall, the Gen from Chicago (lower left) re-enacted the story of Charles, a boy who paid with his life for saying "no" to violence.

Above: A project now at work fostering unity among rich and poor in the Dominican Republic was presented.

Right: One Gen shared his experience of finding God in a remote refugee camp in Indonesia and another described the work of the Gen in helping the survivors of the Lake Nyos disaster in the Cameroon.



guarantee it to them than He who said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (Jn 14:27).

Young people want human rights to be respected. Didn't Christ come on earth to announce the good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom to prisoners, to give sight to the blind and relief to the oppressed?

Young people call for social justice. Where better can they find the courage to face opposition, misery and hypocrisy—the open wounds of our consumer society—than in He who calls blessed those who hunger and thirst for justice?

Young people dislike division.



Bishop Mestice, auxiliary bishop of New York, arrived for the presentation of the citizens of Mariapolis Luminosa and then presided at the Mass which concluded the day. Here we see him seated with Sharry Silvi and Julian Ciabattini, national directors of the Focolare Movement in the United States.



Who can satisfy them more than Jesus who sees humanity as one, and who came to overcome all the barriers existing among groups, minorities, races and nations?

Young people are attracted by the tactic of non-violence. Where better could they find this ideal incarnated than in the One who said we should love even our enemies, thereby carrying non-violence to its most extreme consequences?

Young people love solidarity, the sharing of possessions between rich and poor. Jesus, who said to give to those who ask and not to turn your back on anyone who wants to borrow from you, is the model of solidarity.

Like the first Christians who had understood that Jesus asked that no one claim their possessions as their own, young people can find their deepest desires satisfied by Him.

They are therefore convinced that to walk along that way which is Jesus, is the most intelligent, useful, opportune and fruitful thing they could do to build a united world.

Yes, youth with Jesus, youth and Jesus.

Many ways and the Way.

A very hopeful combination.

In this hope let us live this day of the Genfest as an important step towards towards the united world our Movement wants to build.

Let's try to take stock of these past two years and formulate good, solid resolutions for an even better future. God will help us in a very special way because, after all, the ideal of unity is His.

Go ahead, dear young people, with the fullest confidence. Go ahead with perseverance, with your projects. and by your faith shed light on those around you who often drag their existence down into mediocrity and obscurity. Show to all that every disunity can be avoided and that unity is possible in every situation:

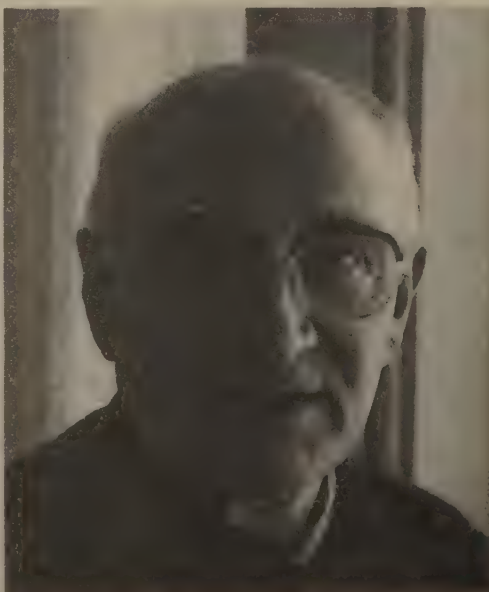
Let your voice be clearly heard that this ideal is not a dream, that only those who have great ideals make history. □

Augustine's Journey

by ANTONIO M. BAGGIO



Augustine teaching rhetoric and philosophy in Rome (Benozzo Gozzoli, 1465 St. Augustine Church San Gimignano, Florence). It was in Rome that Augustine, who at the time did not believe in anything any more, spent perhaps the most difficult moments of his life. Oppressed by serious financial difficulties he was looking for a way out, for a solution for his career that seemed to proceed at a snail's pace.



An encounter with the great master of western thought and father of the Church 1,600 years from his conversion to Christianity. An interview with Father Augustine Trape' O.S.A., director of the New Augustinian Library.

Question: Tell me, Father Trape', we know that as a boy Augustine was raised as a Christian. Why did he abandon his faith?

Answer: Augustine's mother was Christian but his father did not hold any religion. Yet, even though he had not been baptized, the boy received a solid Christian education, which was not so unusual in those times. Then, at a certain point, he was so absorbed in his studies and worldly passions that he lost interest in the high ideal of Christianity. Perhaps, part of the reason lies in the sad situation of the African Church at the time. So, when Augustine began to falter, there was nobody to give him a hand.

Question: This means that Augustine had no particular ideals when, at the age of 19, he read *Ortensius* by Cicero. What happened?

Answer: From his reaction to

Father Augustine Trape', O.S.A. presides over the Patristic Institute Augustinianum of Rome. He is considered one of the foremost experts on St. Augustine.



Bishop Ambrose talks about the Old Testament and gradually dissolves Augustine's difficulties in its interpretation. In Christianity, faith and reason do not exclude one another as he had believed, and the flourishing Christian community of Milan, with its many great thinkers and scholars of the faith can prove it to him.

Cicero's writing it appears clearly that his Christian faith was still alive in him, for he read into it his own desires and aspirations, more than the book actually contained. Cicero was a skeptic, but his young reader was not aware of this. By reading Cicero, in fact, he fell in love with wisdom, and discovered an ideal which would lead him beyond tangible things.

Above all, Augustine was made aware of a constitutional relationship between the human spirit and God. But where is wisdom?

Augustine as a teenager (by an anonymous painter of the XVII cent.) The story of Augustine could be a story of our times—a Christian education in childhood, then life in a lukewarm community which was of no help in moments of difficulty. At 19 he discovers a need for an ideal that is absolute, and gets involved with a sect where he feels he can find this ideal. At 30, he is disappointed and skeptical.

Who can impart it to us? These were the questions Augustine asked himself. And to find an answer, he turned to Scripture.

Question: Which, however, disappointed him.

Answer: So they did, and for two reasons. One of these reasons was quite futile, because it was due to the poor style of the Latin translation used at the time. It really was horrendous Latin. Accustomed as he was to the classics, Augustine couldn't admit that wisdom should be expressed in such a crude form. To him, the harmony of the words was essential to express spiritual beauty. But there was a more serious



Monica accompanies Augustine to school in Tagaste (Painting of the School of Lorenzo Salimbeni, Rome, Vatican Pinacothèque). Augustine's mother played a very important part in her son's life, first by instilling the name of Jesus in the infant, and later by closely following all the events leading to his conversion.

reason to alienate him from Scripture, namely that they contained mysteries he was asked to believe, while wisdom, as Augustine conceived it, was a purely natural phenomenon which did not need faith.

"I was convinced," he was to say later, "that the teaching I wanted to follow was not the one that asked me to believe, but the one that would explain the reasons.

Question: This attitude, if I'm not mistaken, was not entirely wrong. The positive aspect was that he wanted to think out well his choices, don't you think?

Answer: Yes, I do, but it was the point of departure that was negative, namely his unwillingness to accept the fact that faith could shed light on his search for wisdom. He felt that faith and reason were mutually exclusive, as suggested by the

rationalism he had absorbed from Cicero: either faith or reason.

Question: Since Scripture didn't help, where did Augustine turn next?

Answer: While still in this state of mind, he met a group of Manichaeans, who preached a "truth" on a purely rational basis. "We do not force faith on anyone as the Catholics do" they claimed.

Question: Did they prove their convictions by faultless argumentation and clear logic?

Answer: No, they really didn't. They promised to explain how one could reach God through wisdom, and Augustine was content with these promises; he was too happy having found what he'd been looking for. The Manichaeans came at the right moment to solve another dilem-

ma as well, the dilemma of evil which had been weighing heavily on Augustine's mind.

"Where does evil come from? What is its origin? How is it possible that a God who is good should originate evil?" This is how the Manichaeans put the problem, and they answered it by saying that there were two principles at the origin of all reality: a good one, which was the cause of all that is good, and a bad one, the cause of all evil. Later Augustine was ashamed of having accepted so rudimentary an idea.

Question: Was it not, perhaps, the warmth and brotherly affection he found in the Manichaean community that made Augustine so trusting? After all, here he found the togetherness he was looking for.

Answer: Yes, but there is also another motive. Augustine carried the name of Christ in his heart—he had imbibed it with his mother's milk, as he used to say—and the Manichaeans proclaimed themselves disciples of Christ, the true Christians. Augustine therefore felt that Christ dwelled with the Manichaeans rather than in the Church. Christ, yes; Church, no! he used to say.

Question: But didn't he, after a while of associating with the Manichaeans eventually realize their cultural shortcomings?

Answer: He realized it quite soon, because of three points which he considered decisive. First of all he realized that the way the Manichaeans explained the structure of the cosmos was not rational but in direct contradiction with the findings of science at that time. Augustine was well aware that this question did not belong to the central core of the doctrine, but felt that from people who claim to be inspired by the Holy Spirit, one could expect at least that they did not talk nonsense.

Question: What else was wrong?

Answer: There was the problem of the Scripture, which are made up of the Old and the New Testament. They accepted the New but not the Old. But since the New is full of quotes from the Old, the Manichaeans should have accepted or rejected both. They tried to get away with the statement that the quotes from the Old Testament had been put by somebody into the New but did not really belong there originally. It was a case of interpolation.

It was an argument which Augustine found deplorable: how could anyone speak of interpolation without being able to prove it?

Question: How about the Manichaeans' interpretation of evil. Did he still go along with it?

Answer: No, Augustine was convinced that the principle of things can be only one. There cannot be two on the same level. The principle of good must be absolute, and evil a denial of the good, not a bad substance from which all evil derives. At that point Augustine had not solved the problem of evil. His intuition was still in darkness,

but the problem did create a crisis in his relationship with the Manichaeans.

Question: What was the outcome of this crisis?

Answer: He didn't believe in anything anymore. It was the most dangerous moment in the life of Augustine, who adopted the most desperate solution—skepticism. It is the position of a person who thinks that there is nothing he can accept with certainty as true. All there was left was to live of probabilities and not worry about anything else.

In this period, Augustine left Carthage in Africa where he was teaching, and moved to Rome in search of less troublesome students.

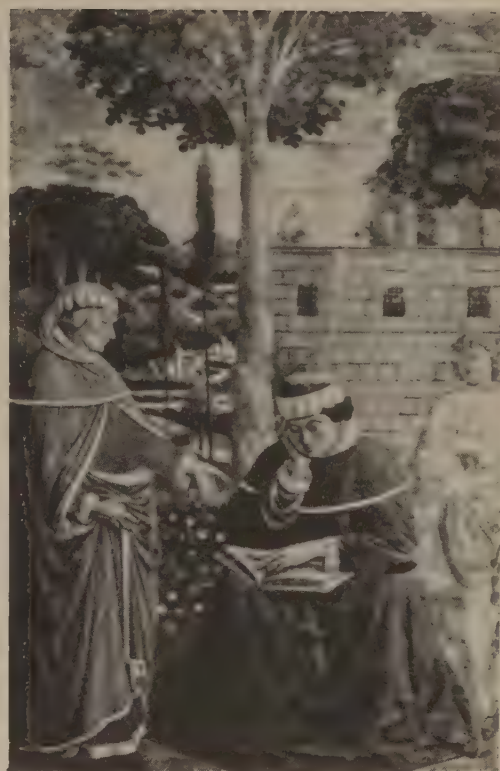
Question: And did he find them?

Answer: Yes, he found there very good students who let him teach in peace and who learned well but who, at the end of the term, disappeared without paying the professor. For Augustine this meant going hungry. Actually, since he came from a poor family, financial problems were something he had to deal with all his life.

Question: Did he at least make a name for himself as a teacher in Rome?

Answer: That he did. So much so that when the prefect of Milan asked the prefect of Rome, Simmaco, to send him a professor of rhetoric for the imperial curia, Augustine was recommended, passed the test of declamation and left for Milan. He was 32 years old, and could consider himself as well established with a secure career in his future.

Question: Was he still searching for something?



Augustine reading the epistles of St. Paul (Benozzo Gozzoli, 1465, St. Augustine's, Church San Gimignano, Florence). "Take it and read it" are the words he felt were addressed to him personally while he was torn by doubt. Opening Scripture and reading St. Paul's letter to the Romans, he was made aware of the call to turn entirely to God. It was the moment of his full conversion.

Answer: No, he was satisfied with what he had and did not worry about any particular problems. But, being himself a great orator, he was very eager to hear the famous Ambrose, the bishop everybody was talking about. So, on Sunday, he went to Ambrose's church to listen to him.

Question: Was Ambrose really the phenomenon people said he was?

Answer: Maybe he wasn't. But he explained the Old Testament, and from one Sunday to the next, he solved all the difficulties of

(Continued on page 23)

LOVE IS STRONGER

*And we have
believed in love
Part III*

*Lazarus Come Out, a book
that many of our readers
know well since it was
published by New City Press
was the autobiography of
Matteo Silvan. It was the
interesting story of a
married man deeply im-
mersed and interested in
the secular world, the
story of a focolarino.*

*Love is Stronger starts
where the other ended, with
the death of his wife Teresa
and with the beginning of a
new chapter in his life.*

*Living City is publishing
it in installments.*

by Matteo Silvan

The day of our birth

Four days had gone by when the pastor sent for me. He wanted to talk. I must say that I found him another person.

Notwithstanding the esteem that he had always had for my family he had been quite brusque with me in the past. Many times he had told me that he could not accept our method of starting from the love of God and inviting, first of all, the members of the community to see each other with the eyes of love and love one another. This, he used to say, could be the point of arrival, but not the point of departure, because you cannot express love if you don't experience it. I would have loved to have replied that to love, for us, means, at least at the beginning, the desire of loving, that is, of doing the will of God which is expressed in his commandment, "Love one another as I have loved you." I had never contradicted him, however, knowing that many are the ways that lead to God.

Now the situation had radically changed, and I felt it was the moment to share with my pastor what I had experienced, that is, that if we love one another, with all the effort of our will, Jesus becomes the companion of our journey. We find him next to us, with us, also when, because of our weaknesses and imperfections, we fall under the weight of the cross. We fall with him, in fact, but we also get up with him. "Therefore," I concluded, "every suffering is transformed into joy, every failure loses its

bitterness, and we can show to the world the countenance of the Risen Lord."

The pastor nodded a few times, and then, smiling, and almost jokingly he told me. "I have understood! There is an episode in the Gospel that seems to explain what you are talking about. It is the story of the sinner who entered the house of Simon, the Pharisee, because she knew that Jesus was there. Without wasting time on an examination of conscience, or asking for forgiveness for her life, she showed him her love by throwing herself at his feet and washing them with her tears. Jesus welcomed her immediately, knowing that that woman would certainly never leave him!"

It was an unexpected comparison! And the pastor, as if trying to comfort me, told me that he had received many phone calls from people who had been deeply touched by the funeral. "The whole parish is talking about it," he told me. "Everything turned out better than I thought," he confessed. "I myself," he said, "was taken by the atmosphere, by the singing. The songs seemed to be hymns to life. For this reason," he concluded, "I went on speaking about the resurrection during the homily. In that moment, in fact, I felt it was a tangible reality shared by the entire assembly.

I had never seen this man so happy. It was my moment to thank him for his words about Teresa, for his description of her as a woman who had lived that "Yes, yes, no, no," of Jesus. I asked him if he knew

that Chiara Lubich had used that very sentence years before to describe Teresa. "I certainly didn't know," he answered, "but it wasn't hard to see that she was like this. And then she was a northerner, like me."

We had been talking for a little while when I understood the reason why he had called me. He wanted me to explain to him how I had reached the moment of grace to think I could transform a funeral into a festive celebration, almost as if death with its trauma of pain and desolation did not exist. Death did, in fact, come and break apart a beautiful family such as mine. "I know," he said, "that death is the day of our birth. But when it comes nobody seems to remember that."

It was hard to find the words to explain what had happened to me. I felt I would have had to tell him the tormented story of the last twenty years. And it was not the moment.

The pastor, seeing my confusion, and also the state of exhaustion I was in because of the very strong emotions of the previous days, told me: "Look, you know now what I want to hear. Think about it and come next week. I will gather a group here and you can tell them everything."

Our home

It is the fifth day after Teresa's departure. The moment has come to go through our things. Soon I will go and join one of the focolare households. And my beautiful house, here on Via Padova, will not be my home anymore.

Teresa and I had watched it being built. We went through

many sacrifices for over fifteen years in order to call it our own. Once, I remember, I caught my wife crying during the night because that month, due to an unforeseen expense, we did not have the money to pay the mortgage. Besides everything else she was expecting our first child. I remember we were forced to ask her brother for a loan. Her proud nature had suffered because of it and she was crying because she felt humbled by this situation.

I found it terribly hard to think that everything would have to go. I had lived in this house for over forty years and everything had a meaning for me, everything was sacred. Every object reminded me of some happy moment of my life ... yet I had to detach myself from everything, everything. Life went on, but now it had

either." I just kept a few things: an armchair, a few letters, my diary as a young man, some books.

In a drawer I found a bank-book for a savings account. There was still some money in it. Teresa, in agreement with me, was administering a certain sum as her own. She used it not only for her own personal expenses but also as means to give her surplus, that is, the fruit of her personal sacrifices, to the community. This is what the members of the Movement do, and Teresa had been part of it for a number of years. I also did it, giving all that I earned by working overtime or for special assignments. My basic salary was enough to cover the expenses of the family.

I opened the little book and noticed that the amounts taken were regular and always the same. It was what she gave as

"If we love one another with all our will, Jesus becomes the companion of our journey."

taken a new route.

As all these thoughts were going through my mind, my two daughters, helped by their friends, were working at putting all in order, and giving away what was not of interest to the future inhabitants of the house. Every once in a while they came to me with an object which, according to them, might have been dear to me. "Nothing, nothing," I answered. "I don't want this

her surplus, no personal expenses were noted.

God Is Love

Work went on in the house as I prepared myself for the meeting in the parish. How could I possibly explain that every decision during the last days had come to me almost instinctively?

I could use the words of Scripture, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in ►

me, though he die, yet shall he live." But everybody knows these words. I felt I wouldn't be able to communicate that 'something new' that they brought about in me and in Teresa's funeral. Furthermore I am a lay person, and I feel called to bear witness more than to give sermons.

I went ahead then and tried to prepare myself to speak about

ly, but also with the commitment of all of myself, my heart, my mind and my will.

So I went back and I took the little book, now so worn with use, which contains the letters of the Apostle John. There I could always find what I was looking for: the real meaning of life. He knew it, and in his first letter, with all the

God dwells in us ...

We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us (1 Jn. 4:12,16).

These lines explained everything. Yes, this was the point, we have believed in love, and we have believed in it also when suffering appeared in our lives.

Now I felt ready to go and give my talk. I didn't need anything else.

"In this letter of St. John I have found everything I need in order to live and in order to die. Everything is love...."

human sentiments, explaining how gradually the love between Teresa and I had become purer, in a certain sense transfigured. But how could I speak about Teresa's death when the pain of her departure was like fire under the ashes? I knew it would have been imprudent to talk about it and risk bursting into tears in front of my audience!

What could I do? I could not speak either in too much of a detached fashion. Someone might be led to think that we didn't love one another. Just the thought of that frightened me.

As time went by I felt I was unable to prepare an acceptable, logical talk. Where could that kind of "logic" be found in Christ?

But also this time, as in other difficult moments in my life, I found the answer in the Gospel, the source of life. I have tried to meditate on it and live it the best I could in these past years of my life, with the help of grace, certain-

warmth we can possibly imagine, he tried to transmit it to us.

There is no syntax in his style. One can only grasp the insistence, almost the immense desire through which he tries to help us penetrate into a reality which overturns our thought processes:

"This is what we proclaim to you: what was from the beginning what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have touched... This life became visible; we have seen and bear witness to it..."

What we have seen and heard we proclaim in turn to you" (1 Jn. 1:1-2).

I stopped. I tried to understand, and then I went ahead finding new light, as the letter continued expanding under every aspect, the fundamental concept: God, Life, Love:

"No one has ever seen God. Yet if we love one another

Love consumes suffering

When the day established for my presentation arrived, the pastor introduced me to the audience. Everybody knew me, yet all seemed to be interested in knowing how I came to this point and the reason for a funeral such as Teresa's. I began to speak slowly, hesitantly at first. I addressed the people who were listening more intently in order to establish a personal relationship with them. I am not a speaker who can talk without looking at somebody. Therefore everytime my eyes met one of Teresa's friends, a well-known face, I stopped and greeted them. "Hi! Francesca ... hi! Anna ... hi! Emilia." It was the moment of explanations, a difficult moment for me, with a chronicle of the events. Only at the end I had the courage to say, clearly and strongly, which is the valid answer for me: "All of this could happen because we have believed in Love." I stopped and I repeated it word for word. "...even before death, we believed in Love, we experienced Love. This love which Jesus gave us consumes suffering, in the sense of redeeming it, removing the sting of bitterness that our human nature attaches to it.

Jesus transforms suffering into love for his own passion."

A long pause followed my words. After a few moments, since I didn't want them to think I invented the sentence, I began reading from the first letter of John which contains it: "We have passed out of death into life because we love the brethren" (1 Jn 3:14). The silence grew deeper. I paused a moment still and then went back to Teresa, her departure which was at the same time an arrival. I explained that we who remain on this side needn't look backward but always forward and high above us to the infinity of God where certainly Someone was awaiting Teresa at the end of her long, often painful, journey. She had started on it later in life, but not too late. You can possess wisdom at every age, I told them, in fact, we can obtain it as soon as we begin to seek it with all our heart and with all our mind. Another long silence followed. I myself was moved and couldn't go any further. The pastor then, to give me a hand, asked me, "In other words you have taken the words of St. John 'God is Love' to heart." "Exactly," I responded, "in fact, they are basic." I am not an expert in theology but in this letter of St. John I have found everything that is needed in order to live and in order to die. Everything is love.... On the day of the funeral everybody was crying, it's true, but they were not tears of anguish, they were tears of people who were deeply moved. In fact, they were the result of that ineffable sentiment that comes over us when we find ourselves immersed in the mysterious but real presence of God.

After I finished, the pastor invited some of the people present to share their impressions but everybody remained silent. They were slightly embarrassed. Only after a while somebody dared to say something: "Certainly you spoke well, but when you die, you die." Another said, "The Church mourns the dead...." And another, "I never heard that kind of singing at a funeral."

Then someone more courageous than the others stood up and said, "Some people when they lose a person they love feel abandoned by God. They even nourish sentiments of hatred toward him and stop going to church.... At this point the conversation became heated. Everybody seemed to have a story to recount about one person or another, about people who after the death of a husband or child stopped attending parish meetings, limiting their religious practice to Sunday

higher forms of spirituality unless we go through the cross. However, love and suffering are two aspects of the same reality: life. At a certain moment, if we remain faithful to the Gospel, we understand that what is negative is nothing else but the positive aspect of life which has not emerged as yet. All we need to do is to develop it wisely. Like when you develop a film and little by little see the printed image appear. This is what Love does.

Another long pause followed. Silence, however, was now filled with the presence of God. The pastor then continued, "The hour of Gethsemane will come for all. But if we have lived in communion with those who were closer to us spiritually, if we have become accustomed to doing the will of the Father, also in little things, everyday, every minute, death will not find us either alone or unprepared. It will be easy for all,

"If we remain faithful to the Gospel, we understand that what is negative is nothing else but the positive aspect of life which has not yet emerged."

Mass perhaps. I began to feel very uneasy. I never expected such a reaction. The pastor, however, intervened to calm down the group. And once calm was restored he began to speak and tried to explain that some negative reactions in the face of death come from a misunderstanding of the cosmic mystery of suffering, of pain, of the cross. There is no progress, no evolution, no pathway, toward

then to sing as they sang the other day, "In paradise with you, in paradise with you."

A new beginning

When the meeting ended everybody stood up and left in silence. It was an unusual sight. I stayed behind with the pastor. After a few moments he told me almost in a whisper, "Do you want to know what I thought about today? These

(Continued on page 24)

WORD OF LIFE

**"To each person the
manifestation of the
Spirit is given for the
common good"**

(1 Cor 12:7).

This Word of life speaks of the graces and special gifts that the Holy Spirit had poured out among the Christians of Corinth. Among them were gifts of prophecy, teaching, and assistance to others which had the purpose of promoting the life of the community.

In the early Church, these gifts of the Spirit were particularly abundant. The Church was just beginning and like all newly born organisms, it needed to be supported by extraordinary kinds of help.

Unfortunately the Christians of Corinth did not always give these gifts their proper place or use them wisely. Instead of building up the community, it happened that these gifts became a source of division, rivalry and jealousy. For this reason, St. Paul had to intervene and explain to the Christians of Corinth their meaning and proper use.

"To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

This Word of life first of all reminds us that we are all individually called to perform a task, a service in the Church for which we receive a particular gift or charism.

Speaking of charisms then, we need not think only of the more evident and extraordinary graces that were and still are given, for example, to founders of religious families, to movements or certain persons

called to perform special tasks in the Church.

There are more common and less visible graces that are given to every Christian with the precise purpose of making him or her a worthy instrument in building up the Christian community where they are.

Carrying the idea one step further we could consider as gifts the talents and abilities we possess.

This Word of life points out to us that, whether they be a natural talent or a given grace, these gifts come from God. He gave them to us to serve others, for the good of the community.

Indeed, one of the most beautiful characteristics and most distinctive signs of an authentic Christian spirit is the ability to place the gifts the Lord has poured out on us at the service of others.

"To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

Each one of us has received a particular gift. The gifts are all different, though, because the needs of the community are various. We can deduce from this that if we want to contribute to the true good of the community we cannot simply do our own thing. We ought to be able to work together. We need to harmonize our function and gifts with those of the others. That is why St. Paul—after enumerating the various charisms—says

that they are all to be animated and bound to one another by mutual love. Love makes it possible to avoid jealousies, ambition, conflicts, rivalry and personalizing one's gift: in a word, love can overcome all the things that are an obstacle to building up the community.

"To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

How then can we live this Word of life well? It seems to me that primarily two directions become clear.

The first is an invitation to place ourselves at the service of the community. For someone that might mean to better use certain qualities or talents that have been lying dormant. For others it might mean giving a broader scope to one's work: giving greater attention to the needs of others so that our work becomes a true service to our neighbor.

The second direction is to beware against individualism. This Word of life tells us that the well-being of the community depends first of all on being able to work together with our brothers and sisters in a spirit of mutual love and of unity.

This month then we should make a greater effort to put into practice the new commandment of Jesus among us and with all our brothers and sisters. If we do, our gifts will benefit the community.

Chiara Lubich

EXPERIENCES

The following
are experiences
in living the Gospel
which some of our readers
shared with us.

MY MOTHER AND I

One day I didn't have school so my mother asked me if I could go with her to work, which is to clean a house. I said yes right away because it was an opportunity to love her concretely.

That night, for some reason, I had a lot of trouble getting to sleep and the following day I woke up more tired than ever. I thought, "I am going to tell my mother I don't feel like going with her anymore." But I remembered the phrase that we were trying to live in those days: "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come" (2 Cor 5:12) and I decided to be new and go and do this little act of love for Jesus.

When we arrived at the house I saw some different, very beautiful works of art which attracted my attention. So I just forgot the reason why I had come and I began looking all around. But once again something deep inside reminded me of that 'yes to loving' that I had said to Jesus and I immediately went to help my mother.

When we finished the job I saw how happy she was. For me it was a new discovery of what a little act can do if it is really done for Jesus. It was enough to change a rapport which seemed to be difficult to change.

One day something happened that made everyone at home nervous. My mother was shouting and I found myself doing the same. There was such a confusion I just forgot the "word of life". My day passed without any desire to love.

In the evening, before I went to bed I felt uncomfortable and unhappy. I understood why. It was because I hadn't loved at all. As I thought of the words of Jesus, I realized that my relationship with my mother could be much better, it could be a Jesus to Jesus relationship. I suddenly desired to bring the day back to be able to live it much better. But I couldn't do that, all I could do was start over again.

The next day I woke up with a new resolution to love, cost what it may! My mother's attitude had not changed. She was still very upset! I asked Jesus for the strength and his help so that I wouldn't react as I had done the day before.

I said to myself, "If Jesus were standing in front of me I wouldn't answer him badly." This thought opened my eyes and I said: "I will do everything out of love."

Here I really put into practice the word of life: "Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" (Rm 15:7). I welcomed my mother as God

welcomes me. This was enough to change her attitude. She became very calm and it was no longer difficult to love her. Our rapport now is more beautiful than it was before.

One day my mother was out and in order to love her I washed the clothes that had accumulated in the laundry room. I really felt a great joy inside as I did it. But when she arrived home and discovered what I had done she was really upset.

I explained to her that I had done it well but she didn't like the way I had done it. There was no way to make her happy. I couldn't understand anymore how to love.

Then the word of life came to my mind: "The Spirit God has given us is no cowardly Spirit, but rather one that makes us strong, loving and wise" (2 Tm 1:7), and I asked myself, "Is my attitude inspired by love?"

I understood that love doesn't mean to do whatever I think is love, but rather to love the other person in the way he or she wants to be loved. So I stopped doing the laundry and I found the opportunity to do many small acts of love really useful to others. I tried to do them well, with the understanding that each one could be the last thing God is asking me to do!

L.M.

An alternative kind of politics

The life and the political activity of Tommaso Sorigi changed radically in the light of the Gospel. The following experience depicts his change as a member of the Italian Parliament.

I was a deputy in Parliament for several years when I met a group of people who impressed me to the very core of my being. I saw that they were trying to live the Gospel out of a religious framework very different from mine. I was becoming disillusioned and embittered by political infighting and in such a crisis that it had become quite difficult for me to see the divine aspect of Christianity.

Their experiences were an enormous gift for me. I contemplated a Christianity that was fresh and alive and all substance, not petrified in formulas and external practices.

The substance that I was discovering was this: the love of God for mankind, his personal love for me. No longer a religion made up of prohibitions and repression but instead a relationship of God's love for us, and in turn our love for him and for every human being.

From these new brothers and sisters I was learning a truth that somersaulted my life: Christ is still alive. I saw how they firmly believed in his words. He had said, "Whatever you do to the least, you do to me," and I realized they truly believed that every relationship with a neighbor was a relationship with Christ. He had said, "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst," and I saw how they truly believed in the presence of Jesus among two or more who live the new commandment of mutual love.

Jesus present in every person, Jesus living among us: it is enough to turn your life around.

I felt that my whole life—beginning with my political

life—could and should undergo a revolution in my attitudes and, as much as I was able, in my concrete actions.

I remembered how the very first time I walked into the hall of Parliament I sadly noticed the absence of any religious sign. Now I was understanding something new. Surely, the presence of an external symbol could have its importance but much more essential was the fact that in that Parliament hall there would be Christians trying to maintain the presence of the living Christ among them and to incarnate him in their daily actions.

Now the exercise of political power was transformed before me in the light of the words of the Gospel, "Those who exercise authority among the Gentiles lord it over them; their great ones make their importance felt. It cannot be like that with you. Anyone among you who aspires to greatness must serve the rest" (Mt 20: 25-26). I understood as never before the affirmation of St. Paul, "There is no authority except from God." If it came from God who is Love, this authority compelled me to be as much as possible a channel of the love of God for people, a giving and a service to constituents.

One year I was given the task of writing the report for the Ministry of Health. It was a joy for me to discover I could live on a grander scale the words of Scripture, "I was sick and you visited me." I realized this attitude had helped me give a concrete and personal frame of reference to the report, not only technical but truly political and



social. Besides the usual aspects of expenses and structures, the concerns of the sick, the safeguards of the health of the individual as well as of the whole population came to the fore as if the sick were one extended Jesus to be visited.

This dedicated effort to recognize Jesus in every neighbor helped me to have a different kind of relationship with constituents, party colleagues, as well as political rivals.

My constituents were no longer only voters to think about in terms of my election or that of my party: there was Christ in them. I felt I had to make my choices in front of God and not the ballot box and work for laws that were according to the one rule of brotherhood and a concrete vision of social justice. I saw barriers existing with my party colleagues because of our different interests and political philosophies disappear in an effort to heal the divisions. It was certainly a tough job but no longer impossible.

In the past I was known to bitterly attack my political adversaries; now they were no longer my enemies. If someone insulted me the Gospel was telling me to turn the other cheek, bless those who curse you, love your enemy. Toward those who fought me and what I represented (I was a member of the Christian Democratic party)—often militant atheists of the Communist party and people who attacked the Church and religion—I realized I could look underneath their political ideology to discover the person there who had a soul. Christ was also in them—perhaps crucified and crying out “My God,

(Continued from page 15)

interpretation Augustine had learned from the Manichaeans. The latter’s criticism of Scripture proved unjust, but above all Ambrose showed in his comments that faith and reason could very well exist together. Augustine realized that by forcing himself to choose between the two, he had based the problem on the wrong premise—for it is faith, which is at the foundation of all human life, that comes to the assistance of reason. This is what the Church had always maintained and so, in the eyes of Augustine, she regained all her authority as guardian of Scripture.

Question: Can we finally say that Augustine was converted?

Answer: It was not a complete conversion as yet. He was still disturbed by the problem of evil. In thinking critically about the Manichaeans position, he began to intuit a solution. It was at this point that he began to read the neo-platonic philosophers.

Question: What did he learn from them?

Answer: They invited him to turn inward to seek the light of truth in his inner self. And Augustine tells us how by re-entering into himself, he found a light that was superior to his intelligence. It was the very light that had created him.

my God why have you forsaken me?” or perhaps “dead” but nevertheless awaiting an act of love from me in order to be able to begin to “rise.”

This was how relationships during a not so easy day in the life of a political person was

Deep in his soul, Augustine discovered God who is Truth, and Being, and the Good: origin of all things.

Evil, he now understood, was not a substance in itself but the deprivation of Good. It does not exist in God, the perfect Being, but it may appear in creatures who are imperfect and who, in their limitations, are exposed to the possibility of doing what is evil. All his life, Augustine continued to go in depth into this difficult problem and thereby gave a fundamental contribution to the doctrine of salvation.

Question: First Cicero, then the neo-platonics; this means that twice non-Christian culture came to Augustine’s assistance....

Answer: But as in the case of Cicero, here, too, Augustine, good Christian that he was, read more into the writings than was really there. True, the neo-platonics solved one of his problems, but they left him with another, namely the problem of the mediator: The ultimate goal is God, creator of all things, but how are we to reach him? It was Scripture that gave the answer. St. Paul revealed Christ not only as Master but also as Mediator, source of grace, Redeemer. And here, in Christ who removes all evil, Augustine’s long journey finally came to rest. □

changing. This new way of acting on many occasions gained—not always political approval—but at least a certain moral respect and appreciation from those who had been considered “enemies.” □

Tommaso Sorigi

(Continued from page 19)

were among the most dedicated people I know, yet as I heard them discuss and become upset, almost refusing to accept your conclusions, a thought which had occurred to me became a conviction. Christianity, at least here in the western world needs a new foundation."

I didn't know what to tell him. I could answer perhaps with

this was a new beginning. Thank you."

He was moved and I was moved with him. There was a bond, now, between us. We had travelled two very different roads, which in that moment converged and we were happy. "Today you gave a full response to the question I had asked you," the pastor added.

"We had travelled two very different roads which in that moment converged."

some sort of a confession. "Do you want to know instead what I thought? At the beginning when I found myself trying to justify myself I remembered the circumstances St. Paul found himself in as a prisoner before the Roman court: "Brethren, ...with respect to the hope and the resurrection of the dead I am on trial" (Acts 23:6). Those words created a great commotion because not all those present agreed on this point. It seems to me that in a certain sense something similar happened today as well." The pastor seemed to agree and taking me by my arm proceeded to walk toward the door saying, "In my parish I have 40,000 people. Ten percent come to Mass on Sundays. At times I wonder how many are really living a deeply Christian life, how many believe in Love. I never tried to figure this out in fear of being too pessimistic. Yet today I received a gift of hope. In fact I have the certainty that

"For this reason, I thank you. In reality, however, you thoroughly affirmed your faithfulness to the Gospel in what is central, most meaningful in it: LOVE. This however is a point of arrival. I still think that it is easy to say that God is Love, but to become totally convinced of this in an existential way, and especially in order to be able to remember it when everything crumbles around us, one needs to experience it for years. You don't get to heaven unless you start from the earth: reality remains reality." I felt that from this point of view he was right: "It is so, it is so," I answered, and he continued, "So I would ask you to continue what you have started by coming and sharing with us the different facets of your spiritual journey, i.e., those moments through which God led you to this last episode. I would be grateful if you returned and told us your whole life story in detail." I agreed with some

perplexity. I was afraid in fact that to share the whole story of my conversion would ask a lot of me and I didn't feel strong enough to do so. I also knew that a book was about to be published with the phases of my suffered journey.

The first idea that came to my mind therefore was to invite the pastor to read it and ask the others to do the same. Yet I knew this would not be love and I abandoned the idea. The pastor, noticing my hesitation, stressed his point with an ulterior request, "Just tell me the truth. You agree with me that you need to start from the earth in order to reach heaven. Let's go back please to the point of departure." So we left each other that day setting an appointment for the next week.

Beyond all things

The second meeting with the pastor and his group went very well. I simply recounted the story of a life lived in all its concrete aspects. Nobody could object to a succession of events all inspired by the desire of following the logic of the Gospel. Many in fact thanked me this time or silently shook my hand or looked at me in a way that meant consent and approval. Also the pastor was happy because I had followed his advice. I spoke about life, facts, starting from the earth and coming back on earth even though with much more light before me.

It was afterwards, as I returned home to a house which we were emptying and that I would soon leave that reality hit me powerfully. I had to stop and think. Yes, for a week I had lived projected outside. Death—this moment of God

which we are all called to live—had introduced me into a completely new dimension. Wasn't this also reality?

In that moment an unusual sentiment of wonderment pervaded me. Death had passed by me, Teresa had departed and I, in great serenity, at 73 years of age, was preparing myself to go and live in a focolare household, in a family totally different from the one in which I'd lived up to that moment.

At my age, I thought, when someone remains a widower, he sees the whole world crumble and tragically end for him. Children, or grandchildren usually don't change the situation much. They're always busy with many things. And even when they do their best to welcome their elderly relatives, they still experience the infinite sadness of not being a part of their life, and of being misunderstood. They may not feel useless, if there are grandchildren and the extended family is maintained alive, however this kind of family is becoming always more rare. It's enough to read the newspapers to realize that in the whole world the problem of aging is a great concern for everyone.

It is true that generous people try the best they can to find useful activities for the elderly. The problem, however, remains and not only in the secular world but also among priests who, having always given generously of themselves, feel at a certain point incapable to face loneliness or a life with younger, more active people.

At this point I understood why I experienced this sense of wonderment for what had happened to me and around me in a few days. The terrible sudden lacer-

ation, in fact, not only did not destroy me but urged me mysteriously, to go beyond all things.

North star

All of this didn't happen by chance, however. For years I had tried to go beyond what is just tangible. And when everything, with the departure of Teresa, was about to fall into darkness, I saw shining before me a star which I already knew. And immediately I turned toward it as you would toward the north star. I knew that only in this way, by adjusting the navigation route over and over again, my life would still have meaning.

I knew that my strength would decline and my sight would grow weaker, nothing however could happen to my star, even if it might appear at times covered with clouds. The star I am speaking of, in fact, the

This is perhaps the last and yet very fruitful activity because, if my mind will stay with me, I thought, I will always be able to give as a gift to others the spiritual wonders unfolding before me. To go ahead in years, I thought, seeking the highest values in life, is in a certain sense like rising slowly in a balloon from the obscurity of a dark valley. Little by little new horizons open up before you. And you see the finite touching the infinite, leading you to new heavens while immensity attracts you, envelopes you and finally, we know, gently welcomes you forever. On earth people speak of death but in reality everything will only be changed because in the economy of the infinite, the word "death" is without meaning. As I followed my thoughts I couldn't help

"At 73 years of age I prepared to go and live in a family totally different from my own."

star attracting me to itself is love for Jesus on the cross, for Jesus who dies in abandonment.

His solitude would also be mine; in my pain, in my agony I would always find him. And with him I would always be able to say "My night knows no darkness." I knew in that moment that I would never be idle. When every other activity would become impossible there would always be something I could do: I could meditate, contemplate the eternal realities.

imagining my pastor inviting me again to go back on earth, to return to the level of daily life. It is here, in fact, in the many concrete situations of every life that the game is won or lost. It is like when you play a game of cards. You need to decide moment by moment whether you want to hold or lay down your cards. Furthermore, if the adversary shows too easy an opening you can be certain there is a trap.

(To be continued.)

MARIAPOLIS 1987

The 1987 Mariapolis will be an extraordinary opportunity to learn, to grow, to share and above all to experience unity which is the basis and goal of the Christian community. You, your family and friends and all those interested in knowing more about the Focolare spirituality are cordially invited to attend.

The Mariapolis gatherings are the summer meetings of the Focolare, held every year, for those who wish to come into contact with it.

For one week the Mariapolis offers to hundreds of people of all ages and walks of life a very full program that includes general sessions with talks on the spirituality of unity, sharing of experiences in living this spirituality, documentaries, meetings in small sharing groups and recreational programs. The Mariapolis is a time for prayer and recollection. The celebration of the Eucharist is at the center of each day and all participants gather together at the conclusion of the activities for evening prayer.

Children have separate activities which involve them in the life of the Mariapolis through various spiritual and recreational programs. Special programs are available for teenagers as well.

The week, however, is more than the sum of its parts. It is an experience of how life, also every day life, can be transformed if love and unity are its foundation. When the Mariapolis ends, people find that it was not only a tremendously enjoyable week, but they have experienced a way of living that they will be able to bring back home.

SOUTHWEST:

New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico

June 28, after supper - July 4, after breakfast

Home of the main campus of New Mexico State University, Las Cruces is a pleasant blend of indian-spanish-anglo heritage and modern technology. A city of 60,000, Las Cruces is the second largest city in New Mexico. Its most distinguishing geographical features are the Organ Mountains to the east and the Rio Grande to the West. The university is located on the south edge of Las Cruces and is 40 miles from El Paso, Texas.

MIDWEST:

Hope College
Holland, Michigan

July 12, after supper - July 18, after breakfast.

Hope College is located in a residential area of Holland, Michigan. Founded by Dutch pioneers in the mid-1800's, this town of 50,000 hosts a celebrated Tulip Festival each year. The campus is just a short walk from beautiful Lake Macatawa which stretches 7 miles westward to the sandy shores of Lake Michigan, 170 miles north of Chicago and 180 miles west of Detroit, Hope College can easily be reached via I-96 from the north or via I-94 from the south.

EAST COAST:

Mariapolis Luminosa
Hyde Park, New York

July 19, after supper (registration opens at 6 p.m.)
- July 25, after breakfast

Last September, Mariapolis Luminosa was inaugurated as the Permanent Mariapolis of North America. This year it will host a summer Mariapolis. Located in the historic town of Hyde Park, it is not far from such attractions as the Roosevelt Home, Library and Museum and the Vanderbilt Mansion. Mariapolis Luminosa can easily be reached from north or south via the New York Thruway or the Taconic State Parkway, and from east or west via Route 84.

CARIBBEAN

The Mariapolis for the Caribbean will be held in Jarabacoa, Dominican Republic, in Spanish only. Space is limited. Invitations are being sent only to Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic.

NORTHWEST CANADIAN MARIAPOLIS

The Northwest Canadian Mariapolis will be held at David Thompson University Centre in Nelson, British Columbia. Those wishing to participate in this Mariapolis are asked to write to the Focolare in Canada. Please see page 6 for addresses.

EASTERN CANADIAN MARIAPOLIS

The Mariapolis to be held at Carlton University in Ottawa, Canada, will be in French and English. Those interested in participating are requested to contact the Focolare Centers in Toronto, Canada.

SOUTHWEST MARIAPOLIS

New Mexico State University
Las Cruces, New Mexico
June 28, after supper to
July 4, after breakfast

MIDWEST MARIAPOLIS

Hope College,
Holland, Michigan
July 12, after supper to
July 18, after breakfast

EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS

Mariapolis Luminosa
Hyde Park, New York
July 19, for supper to
July 25, after breakfast

GENERAL INFORMATION

Special services provided:

Children's program — Nursery facilities

Simultaneous translations:

Southwest, East Coast Mariapolis

Spanish

(When you check for translation please indicate how many people will be needing it.)

Priests should bring their own alb and stole for concelebration.

We cannot provide accommodations prior to the beginning or after the ending of the Mariapolis.

If small children who are not required to pay for accommodations (see each Mariapolis for age limit) use a bed, they will have to pay for it.

Young people under 18 years of age unaccompanied by a parent must have a permission slip signed by a parent.

Pets are not allowed in dormitories.

Daily rates available for those not attending the whole week.

Accommodations are in college dorms with double occupancy rooms. A limited number of single rooms are available for an additional charge.

THE 1987 MARIAPOLIS on the "Effects of Living the Word"

"The word makes us live. ● The word makes us free. ● The word guarantees happiness. ● The word converts. ● The word purifies us. ● The word draws us to our specific vocations. ● The word brings forth the hatred of the world and the sanctity of the disciple. ● The word makes us see the truth. ● The word brings comfort. ● The word gives us joy. ● The word produces works. ● The word gives wisdom. ● The word preserves us from human concerns. ● The word obtains everything. ● The word brings about union with God. ● The word gives us hope of eternal life. ● The word makes us one. ● The word changes one's mentality. ● The word makes each soul a heaven."

CHIARA LUBICH

YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

FOCOLARE MOVEMENT—MARIAPOLIS

WHERE TO SEND YOUR REGISTRATION

FOR SOUTHWEST MARIAPOLIS TO:

Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 71701

Los Angeles, CA 90071 OR

Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 15726

San Antonio, TX 78212

FOR NORTHWEST MARIAPOLIS TO:

Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 1251

Coquitlam, B.C.

Canada V3J 6V9

Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 71701

Los Angeles, CA 90071 OR

Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 302 - Stn. T

Toronto, Ontario

Canada M6B 4A3

FOR MIDWEST MARIAPOLIS TO:

Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 53426

Chicago, IL 60653 OR

FOR EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS TO:

Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 496

New York, NY 10021

Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 4958

Washington, DC 20008

Focolare Movement - Mariapolis
P.O. Box 239

Roslindale, MA 02131

TERMS OF PAYMENT

Registration: The registration fee is not included in the accommodations fee. Please note fees and deadlines for registration and accommodations under specification for each Mariapolis. Lat registration fee: US\$5 additional.

Your cancelled check is your receipt.

Cancellations in writing received prior to dates indicated for each Mariapolis will be given full refund. After this date money is transferable to another person but not refundable.

Before filling out this REGISTRATION FORM, please read carefully detailed information on both sides of the form

SOUTHWEST MARIAPOLIS

Las Cruces, New Mexico

June 28, after supper to July 4, after breakfast

REGISTRATION FEE

Adults.....	US\$100
Married couples attending with own children under 18 years.....	US\$150
Youth, whether accompanied by parents or not, except children 13 and under pay a registration fee.)	US\$ 30
14-17 years.....	US\$ 30
13 years and under.....	US\$ --

ACCOMMODATIONS: Meals and lodging:

Adults.....	US\$110
14-17 years.....	US\$110
8-13 years.....	US\$ 90
2-7 years.....	US\$ 80

accommodation fee for children under 2 unless they use a trailer. In which case the fee is US\$30. Please specify on the registration form if so desired. **No trailers permitted.**

TERMS OF PAYMENT

Registration fee due by **June 3**. Full amount to be paid by **June 24**. Full refund for cancellations received in writing by **June 24**. **MULTANEUS TRANSLATION:** ☐ Spanish. Number needed

MIDWEST MARIAPOLIS

Holland, Michigan

July 12, after supper to July 18, after breakfast

REGISTRATION FEE

Adults.....	US\$100
Married couples attending with own children under 18 years.....	US\$150
Youth, whether accompanied by parents or not, pay a registration fee.	US\$ 30
12-17 years.....	US\$ 30
2-11 years.....	US\$ 25

ACCOMMODATIONS

Meals and lodging:	US\$120
Adults.....	US\$120
Youth: 12-17 years.....	US\$ 60
5-11 years.....	US\$ 60
0-4 years no charge when in same room as parents.	

TERMS OF PAYMENT

Registration fee due by **June 12** (please use registration form), full amount to be paid by **June 22**. Full refund for cancellations received in writing by **June 30**.

DON'T MISS IT!



EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS

Hyde Park, New York

July 19, after supper to July 25, after breakfast

REGISTRATION FEE

Adults.....	US\$100
Married couples attending with own children under 18 years.....	US\$150
All youth, whether accompanied by parents or not) except children 2 and under pay a registration fee.	US\$ 30
Youth: 3-17 years.....	US\$ 30

ACCOMMODATIONS: Meals and lodging:

Adults.....	US\$110
Youth: 13-17 years.....	US\$110
3-12 years.....	US\$ 55
Meals only: Adults.....	US\$60
Youth: 13-17 years.....	US\$60
3-12 years.....	US\$30

Accommodations are summer-camp style and space is limited. Send in your reservation as soon as possible if you want accommodations on the premises. Campsites available in the nearby area. For information call: Interlake Farm (914) 266-5387. Registration fee due by **June 19**. Full amount due by **July 6**. Full refund for cancellations received in writing by **June 30**. **MULTANEUS TRANSLATION:** ☐ Spanish. (Please check if needed and specify number) _____

I/We will attend the —

- ☐ SOUTHWEST MARIAPOLIS
☐ MIDWEST
☐ EAST COAST MARIAPOLIS

NAME(S) OF PARTICIPANT(S)

[Please indicate age and sex of participant(s) under 18 years of age.]

LAST NAME:

Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐

FIRST NAME:

Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐

Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐

Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐

Mr. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Miss ☐

ADDRESS: Street _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Tel. _____

REGISTRATION(S): single persons \$ _____ couple \$ _____ Total \$ _____

ACCOMMODATIONS:

children \$ _____ adults \$ _____ Total \$ _____
and youth Amount enclosed \$ _____

(Please make check payable to Focolare Movement in US\$)
If you plan to participate in only a part of the Mariapolis please check below—

DAY OF ARRIVAL:

breakfast ☐ lunch ☐ dinner ☐

DAY OF DEPARTURE:

breakfast ☐ lunch ☐ dinner ☐

I will come by car and can offer _____ number of seats.

Please send me more information about group fare ☐ Bus ☐

What is the Focolare Movement?

THE BEGINNINGS

FOCOLARE means "hearth," "family fireside." What first strikes people when they come in contact with members of the Focolare, whether in small groups or in large gatherings, is the atmosphere of a family. It is a family formed by many different people in various walks of life. The Focolare Movement is also known as the "Work of Mary." Under this name it was approved by Pope John XXIII in 1962.

The Focolare Movement began in 1943 in Italy. In the midst of the terrible destruction of World War II, Chiara Lubich realized that God is the only one worth living for. As a result, she began to center her life on the Gospel, together with a small group of young women who followed her. Their ideal became one of striving toward the fulfillment of Jesus' last prayer to the Father: "May they all be one" (Jn.17:21).

The life of Chiara and her first companions, and the spiritual way they spontaneously followed, gave rise to the unique form of spirituality of the Focolare Movement, a spirituality of unity. It has proved to be a powerful means of introducing the Gospel into modern life, of going to God together.

WHO ARE THE FOCOLARINI

Single men and women live in separate communities called Focolare Centers. Their principal aim is to achieve unity among themselves through mutual charity practiced twenty-four hours a day. They follow the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. They work as other laymen and women in regular jobs and professions.

Some married persons, even though continuing to live in their families, participate fully in the life of either the men's or women's Focolare Centers in their common effort to achieve this same unity. They are called "Married Focolarini" and form the backbone of a vast Movement within the Movement, called the New Family Movement.

THE VOLUNTEERS AND THE NEW HUMANITY MOVEMENT

The Volunteers, also called the "Volunteers of God," are a large group within the Focolare Movement; they would like to transform all human realities according to the Gospel spirit. The Volunteers are the backbone of the mass movement called New Humanity. The aim of this Movement is to help form a society made of men and women who are made "new" by the Gospel message and who can then bring new life to all fields of human activity (education, business, etc.). This results in new social relationships which, in turn, lead to the realization of new structures of society.

GEN

The new generations of the Focolare Movement form another Movement or, better, three movements: the Gen 2, the Gen 3 and the Gen 4 Movements, divided according to their various age groups. "Gen" stands for new generation. The Gen have committed themselves to living the Gospel message of love and to sharing with other youth the conviction they have that the Gospel is the answer to every question and the motive for everything they do.

THE MOVEMENT AMONG THE RELIGIOUS

Men and women religious — although they live according to their own rules and constitutions and are already a distinct part of the Church through their religious families — can also be associated with the Focolare.

Contact with the Movement helps them to focus their attention on the specific charism of their founders, and to see how it can be lived in the present time.

PRIESTS — PRIESTS' MOVEMENT — SEMINARIANS — PARISH MOVEMENT

Many diocesan priests are committed to living the spirituality of the Focolare Movement. Some of them live in community. They form the backbone of the Priests' Movement which is made up of priests who live the spirituality of unity.

FOCOLARE FAMILY

The largest group within the Focolare Movement is made up of men, women and young people who are connected with the Movement without having any formal ties with it. Their bond of unity stems from their acceptance of its spirit and their desire to live it.

ECUMENISM

The Movement not only crossed the political boundaries of more than 100 countries, it has also gone beyond the barriers erected for centuries between the various Christian Churches.

Ecumenical activities take place in the different parts of the world where the Movement exists.

In the past few years a promising, ongoing dialogue has been established with faithful of other religions.

SUMMER MARIAPOLIS

Summer meetings are held every year for those interested in the Movement and for those who wish to come into contact with it. For one week persons of all ages and walks of life are exposed to the spirituality of unity. Above all, they strive to practice it by creating among themselves a rapport that molds them into a community. It is intended to be a basic experience of such intense unity that the people will be able to bring it back into their own environments. And this is the most striking fruit of these conventions. They tend to be models of a world which lives according to the Gospel.

PERMANENT MARIAPOLIS

The need to prolong the experience of the summer meetings brought about the birth of small cities called Permanent Mariapolis. They are made up of young men and women, as well as whole families, who are there for a designated period of time to be formed according to the Gospel spirit of unity.

They also attend classes in Sacred Scripture, Theology and Sociology and work for their own support.

MARIAPOLIS CENTERS

In addition to the Permanent Mariapolis, there are Mariapolis Centers, which are training centers for the members of the Movement.

FOCOLARE ADDRESSES IN NORTH AMERICA

CHICAGO:
P.O. Box 53426
Chicago, IL 60653

SAN ANTONIO:
P.O. Box 32302
San Antonio, TX 78216

NEW YORK:
P.O. Box 496
New York, NY 10021

BOSTON:
P.O. Box 239
Roslindale, MA 02131

WASHINGTON, DC:
P.O. Box 4958
Washington, DC 20008

LOS ANGELES
P.O. Box 71701
Los Angeles, CA 90071

TORONTO:
P.O. Box 302 — Stn.T
Toronto, Ontario
Canada M6B 4A3

Living City is
something special



Time moves on ...
Mark the months with Living City.

For subscription, please use the enclosed envelope

LIVING CITY
P.O. Box 126
JAMAICA, NEW YORK 11415

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 420
Long Island City, N.Y.